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Milner Fund Awards Hawking, Higgs Boson Team

By The Moscow Times

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Billionaire Yury Milner's foundation on Tuesday awarded special prizes of $3 million each to British cosmologist Stephen Hawking and a group of seven scientists at the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland.

Hawking was honored for his research on black holes, while the scientists working at the Swiss particle accelerator discovered the Higgs boson, a breakthrough that dramatically improved understanding of the fundamental structure of matter.

The foundation, whose awards are given for achievements in theoretical physics, also announced the winners of the Physics Frontiers Prize, which awards $300,000 to each winner.

These include Alexander Polyakov, a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences and professor at Princeton University, and Joseph Polchinski, a professor at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Both work in the areas of quantum field theory

and string theory.

Another group of winners is researching the quantum properties of solid matter. It consists of Charles Kane of the University of Pennsylvania, Laurens Molenkamp of the University of Wuerzburg and Shoucheng Zhang of Stanford.

These scientists were chosen by the previous winners of the prize, who had been selected by Milner himself. Winners are automatically nominated for the $3 million Fundamental Physics Prize, which will be awarded next year.

The $100,000 New Horizons award for emerging work was given to Niklas Beisert, of E.T.H. Zurich; Davide Gaiotto, of the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics in Ontario, and Zohar Komargodski of the Weizmann Institute in Israel.

Milner, who describes himself as a "failed physicist," is a shareholder of Mail.ru Group.

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